UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/48/491
11 October 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-eighth session
Agenda item 91 (d)

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In resolution 46/159 of 19 December 1991, the General Assembly, having reaffirmed that, while developing countries have the primary responsibility for promoting technical cooperation among themselves, the United Nations system should play a prominent role as promoter of and catalyst for technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC); urged the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to take the lead role in assisting developing countries to overcome the problems encountered in their efforts to promote and implement activities in TCDC; and urged all Member States, UNDP and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system to give high priority in their particular fields of activities to the support of activities in TCDC.

2. During the reporting period, a review of the progress in the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries was made, which covered, inter alia: (a) progress achieved in TCDC activities by developing and developed countries; (b) progress made by the United Nations system; and (c) the role of women in TCDC. Although the responses from Governments of developing countries showed great variation in the progress made, of those countries that provided information, most reported that their TCDC activities had increased. This was reflected in the increasing number of experts and trainees exchanged, in the joint studies and workshops carried out, and in the networking arrangements set up and bilateral agreements concluded.

3. UNDP adopted TCDC as one of the seven areas of focus for the 1992-1996 programming period, thus re-emphasizing the priority it gave to TCDC. Apart from the implementation of the work programme of the new measures undertaken during the period under review, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1992/41, in which it called upon all parties in the development effort to give TCDC "first-consideration" as a modality of programme/project implementation.

4. The organizations of the United Nations system also reported an increased emphasis on TCDC as reflected in the large number of promotional and operational TCDC activities supported by them. Nearly all of the organizations that responded reported having adopted or being in the process of adopting policies to accelerate the use of the TCDC modality.

5. An increasing number of activities supported by the United Nations Development Programme Special Unit for TCDC facilitated the participation of women, and many of the United Nations organizations have likewise reported similar trends.

6. A meeting of the TCDC focal points of the United Nations system was held in July 1992 to finalize guidelines for the review of the policies and procedures in those organizations for the promotion of TCDC. The meeting reviewed UNDP's draft report on the status of policies and procedures in the United Nations system and agreed on a set of guidelines which were submitted to the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries entrusted ACC with the monitoring of the implementation of the guidelines (see A/48/39, annex I, decision 8/1).

7. On the basis of extensive consultations with Governments, intergovernmental organizations and organizations of the United Nations system, and based on the reviews and evaluations of the programmes of the United Nations system in TCDC and following an expert group meeting on TCDC which was held in Morocco in February 1993, a strategy was prepared for the promotion and application of TCDC in the 1990s. Among the major elements of the strategy are: expanded TCDC sensitization at the national level; articulation of national TCDC policies; strengthened TCDC focal points at the country level and within the organizations of the United Nations system; expansion of the database on capacities in developing countries; and mobilization and provision of resources for TCDC, in particular for funding activities that match the capacities and needs of developing countries for networking and twinning arrangements and for activities that address common problems. The strategy focused on ways and means of enhancing the widespread use of TCDC on development activities.

8. At its eighth session, the High-level Committee welcomed the strategy on TCDC and called upon all parties to implement on a priority basis the elements of the strategy (ibid., decision 8/2, sect. I).

9. In recognition of the fact that TCDC is primarily the responsibility of developing countries themselves, the role of UNDP and of the United Nations system as a whole has been limited to promoting and catalysing TCDC. Through its Special Unit for TCDC, UNDP has adopted a multi-pronged approach to the promotion of TCDC, chief among which are the following:

(a) With a view to accelerating the promotion of TCDC, UNDP allocated over $3.3 million during 1991 for promotional TCDC which differed in character and in thrust from the previous programmes for the promotion of TCDC. Five major types of activities were supported: sensitization and orientation in TCDC; strengthening of TCDC focal points at the country, subregional and regional levels; matching of capacities and needs; workshops on subjects and problems of common concern; and data management services in TCDC. Further, the period

witnessed increased collaboration between the Special Unit and United Nations agencies through increased complementarities of effort and resources notably with the former Department for Economic and Social Development of the Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the World Health Organization. Increased use of about $34 million IPF was mobilized through the injection of a much smaller amount from the Unit's special project resources.

(b) Of the revised allocation of $10.5 million 1/ earmarked, $7.8 million or nearly 75 per cent has already been committed, mostly in response to requests for assistance from developing countries. The balance of $2.7 million has been earmarked for major subprogrammes, dealing mostly with the enhancement of the capacities of institutions of developing countries and with studies and evaluations.

10. The new subprogrammes prepared in the context of the overall strategy for the 1990s are major departures from past approaches in that they represent improvements and innovations in the promotion and accelerated use of the TCDC modality. One subprogramme will cover compilation and dissemination of information on successful TCDC experiences, practices and technologies; intensification and expansion of the effort to identify institutions of developing countries that have successfully applied the TCDC modality; and the continued improvement and expansion of the database on technical expertise and capacities of institutions of developing countries. Another subprogramme will fund activities that aim at increased utilization of offers for training from institutions in developing countries to others; fund networking or twinning arrangements; strengthening selected institutions that could serve as centres of excellence and identification of models for enhanced utilization of the TCDC modality; and assistance in the development of strategies, policies and procedures for the promotion of TCDC in selected countries, subregional and regional organizations and within the United Nations system.

Notes

1/ The original allocation of $15 million was cut down to $10.5 million because of UNDP's financial stringencies.